

2.4. Deputy A.E. Jeune of the Chairman of the Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel regarding hospital waiting times and hospital projects:

Would the chairman please advise what consideration his panel has given to hospital waiting times and to hospital projects - for example, information systems, with regard to Value for Money and benefits realisation - and if the reply is none, could he please explain why?

Deputy G.P. Southern: (Chairman, Health, Social Security and Housing Scrutiny Panel):

It is a great pleasure to be on the receiving end of the attentions of the good Deputy. So far since 2009 my panel - Health, Social Security and Housing - has held 8 hearings on health related matters and with the Minister for Health and Social Services. The latest was on 13th December 2010, and we discussed all sorts of matters, including the C.S.R. (Comprehensive Spending Review) Stages 1 and 2, voluntary redundancies, the maintenance of the physiotherapy services, mental health services, suicide data, Williamson implementation and the effect of pay and conditions on recruitment, the waiting list on the endoscopy services and primary care delivery, including computing requirements for the database for primary and linking with secondary primary healthcare. I also asked questions on 16th and 30th November, 6th December and 1st February on cancelled operations and waiting times specifically.

Deputy A.E. Jeune:

I thank the chairman for his reply.

2.4.1 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

I am aware of the chairman's frustration perhaps that a lot of matters are under review, but I wonder whether he could switch the emphasis. He is well known for his reports on income support, and I wonder whether he might be prepared to switch the emphasis and look in greater detail at issues in the health service, albeit that some are, as we have on E.S.C. (Education Sport and Culture), the problem of them being under review.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

The problem is, indeed, that everything is under review in the health service. I am aware that we have been concentrating particularly on income support, a major initiative over the past few years. We are, in fact, going to change our emphasis but we are moving on to housing, which we have neglected and we have not examined for some time. As the Deputy knows, the width of the brief that my panel has is extremely wide indeed.

2.4.2 Deputy P.V.F. Le Claire of St. Helier:

I wonder if the chairman can inform us as to whether or not private operations in the hospital that receive revenue are kept within the Health Department, or are they returned to the centre, as with housing rents? Will he be looking into those sorts of issues?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I am afraid I cannot give the Deputy any information on that but I will endeavour to find out and see and get a response to him as soon as I can.

2.4.3 Deputy D.J. De Sousa of St. Helier:

Would the chairman not agree with me, as I sit on the panel, that it is a wide remit that we cope with and that we have, in fact, in this 2 and a bit years covered Social Security, we have covered Health with the dental review that I led myself, and that we are now doing Housing, so we are covering all remits.

The Deputy Bailiff:

If I may say so, Deputy, if an Assistant Minister put a supplementary question to the Minister the Assembly would be very unimpressed.

Deputy G.P. Southern:

If I may just respond to that plant; I think it was a cabbage.

2.4.4 Deputy R.G. Le Hérissier:

Would the chairman not agree that given the excellent report that was done 18 months ago on vulnerable children, under the leadership of Senator Breckon, of which the chairman was an active member, that there is a model there that if his panel is overworked he could well look to sub-panels constituted in large part of other members who could drive through some of these studies. We are all, in fact, guilty of not doing this to the extent we should. Will he not agree that this is a way forward and that Health and Social Services are of enormous concern to the population, and I think they would like to feel that there is some pressure being applied?

Deputy G.P. Southern:

I will bear the Deputy's wise words fully in mind.